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THE NATURALIST IN NICARAGUA.

THE NATURALIST IN NICARAGUA.

The record of scientific observations made by menof business whilst travelling or engaged in foreign countries may safely be placed amongst the more generally interesting classes of literature, and when, as in the case of Mr. Butr's book; it relates to a district to which much British capital has been sent for assisting the development of its mineral and other resources, it should be particularly acceptable to the readers of the Mining Journal. The Chontales district naturally receives a large share of Mr. Belt's attention, and whether geological, geographical, or general information be required it large of Santo Domingo is in the province of Chontales, nearly mid-way between the Atlantic and the Pacific, where Central America begins to wise out another and of the narrow shames of Pausan and Costa Ric. It is in the miss of the great forest that covers mest of the Atlantic sope of Central American Commence of Central American Commence of Central Commence of Central American Commence of Central Commence of Central Commence of Central American Commence of Central Commence

ie methods of dealing with it at the reduction works, and from his narrative nuch useful information may be acquired. The chief object of the book being, as the title indicates, to record the observations of a naturalist rather than of a miner, some extremely interesting accounts of ants, butterflies, monkeys, &c., as well as anecdotes of their habits and remarkable instances of their instinct are given; yet there is much that will prove valuable to the miner, and the careful study of the volume will be desirable to men of that class visiting thinly-peopled and comparatively un-

explored mining districts, if for no other purpose than to learn how to live agreeably and contentedly where Nature is one's chief companion. As the work is published by Mr. Murray, it is scarcely necessary to state that it is well printed, and abundantly illustrated, and will thus form a handsome library volume.

THE GOLD FIELDS OF SOUTH AFRICA.

The following letters respecting the gold fields of South Africa have been addressed to the editor of the Times:—

The following letters respecting the gold fields of South Africa have been addressed to the editor of the Times:—

Str.—So many reports of gold fields in South Africa have been current from time to time, without any distinct realisation, that all faith in these discoveries was beginning to fade. Now, however, facts are so numerous, and so well authenticated, that it would be harder to disbelieve than to credit them. I have seen so many persons who have been on the spot, and so many nuggets and specimens of alluvial gold, that I venture to think, not withstanding the wonderful products of the diamond fields, that the riches of South Africa are only beginning to be developed. You will probably have heard more in London of the gold at Marabastadt as, I believe a company has been organised to work quartz reefs in that locality, the result of which has yet to be seen; and athough the evidence that has reached me is, on the whole, favourable, yet it is not so copious as that in respect of the district near Lydenberg. This place is in the Transvaal, about 500 miles beyond the diamond fields of New Rush (now called Kimberley), and at present the access is most difficult. A road, so called by courtesy, exists, but it is rather a track over boulders and ravines, which no driver in the world but a genuine South African "rider" would face, and across which nothing but an African ox waggon could live. It now takes about 25 to 30 days for a mule wagon to go from the Cape to the diamond fields, the distance being in round numbers 800 miles. Owing to the late severe drought forage over most of this distance is enormously dear, and freight has in consequence gone up to 83/, per ton 6 2000 lbs. It is true goods may be got up at a cheaper rate we East London or the Kowle, but this involves transhipment, and there being only ox wagons on these routes the progress is very slow. You will at once see how, with immense cost of transport and the great devalues, goods of all description are at fabulous prices on the gold fields, and thi

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PROFITABLE MINING ON THE PACIFIC COAST.—The prospects of the mines, especially upon the Comstock lode, were shown to be particularly encouraging at the close of 1873, a thorough mania existing for all classes of shares at comparatively high prices: 43 mines quoted on the San Francisco Stock Exchange were selling for \$60.917,100 in the aggregate, or nearly \$1,500,000 per mine. Fifteen of the principal mines dealt in paid in dividends during the year \$14,210,500, of which the Belcher contributed \$6,762,000; the Forom Roint, \$6,100,000; the Idaho, in Grass Valley, \$982,900; and the Eureka and the Raymond and Ely, \$800,000 each. Both Belcher and Crown Point were selling for less than \$61,000,000 each, or under two years purchase. It is stated that the \$14,000,000 of dividends justmentioned does not include many mines, particularly in California, which are paying regular dividends to San Francisco owners, which would doubtless increase the amount to (say) \$16,000,000, an interest of 16 per cent. upon a valuation of \$100,000,000, which would twice over the market value of the whole of the mines on the Comstock ledge. Comparative tables of dividends to \$1872 and \$163 show an important improvement in all classes of stock, but especially in mining and insurance companies. The figures were—

Four commercial banks

\$884,609

Fen savings banks

\$417,441 ... \$169,768 isting for all classes of shares at comparatively high prices: 43 mines

1879. 1873. 334,569 \$ 988,470 117,441 3,763,758 157,500 895,000 22,500 227,000 23,000 57,500 857,500 22,500 23,000 6,731,100 535,338

year was \$6,624,900, or nearly 100 per cent.; yet in April, 1872, the Comstock ledge was certainly selling at twice as much as at present.

Enormous Diamond and Valuable Sapphires.—The lectures on mineralogy for the present term were commenced at King's College yesterday morning, Prof. Tennant, F.G.S., remarking that in the present series he proposed to treat of rock masses and the metalliferous minerals, but that he would avail himself of the opportainterous minerals, but that he would avail himself of the opportunity of saying a few words with regard to a very choice diamond which he was able to show to the class; indeed, during the 35 years he had lectured in the College he had never had so fine a specimen to exhibit. A few months since one of his former students brought him the crystal of which the model was on the table, and which in its original state weighed 112 carats; it had since been cut into the beautiful brilltant they now saw, and which weighed 66 carats.







Front view.

Side view.

Front view.

Side view.

Back view.

The above diagrams represent the gent; the cutting was done in Lenther-lane, and he might observe with regard to this kind of work that 100 years since the English diamond-cutters were the most celebrated in the world, but as these died off the trade fell into the hands of Jews, who, being at the time subject to great injustice, socially and otherwise, both in England and elsewhere, migrated in large numbers, including the diamond-cutters, to Rotterdam, the only city which gave them comparative freedom, and thus the diamond-cutting business became there established. Now, however, the Jews enjoy full freestom in this country, and it is found that they full all the duties of citizens with great honour, many now occupying high they full all the duties of citizens with great honour, many now occupying high story that they full all the duties and other callings—indeed, some of his most diligent and successful students had belonged to the dewish persuasion.

The diamond cutting trade was now coming back to England, and the stone before them afforded a fair sample of what excellent work could be done here. He might mention that the stone was valued in its present form at 20,000%, whilst the value of the models of it, which had been cut by the best lapidaries, was a mere trifle, that in glass costing him but 19s., and that in crystal but 2%.

The Professor also exhibited a South African diamond in the matrix, consisting chiefly of broken fragments of chieflic and clay slater. For the first diamond brought from the Cape he offered (he said) 40%, and Mr. Coster, of Amsterdam, bid 50%, but the Governor of the Colony had directed that it should not be sold, as he would take it at the highest price offered. They would remember that the rule given by the best authorities upon diamonds for ascertaining the value of cut diamonds, was to multiply the square of the weight in carats by 8, and call it pounds, so that the diamond on the table would be worth 68×66×8=34,848. He went on to explain

THE CAMP FLOYD MINING COMPANY.—The Camp Floyd Mining Company (Limited), which has been for some time under a cloud, is making a goo showing, through the efforts of the resident manager, Mr. Henry Sewell. This gentleman has been for the past five months energetically at work in bringing the company's affairs to a satisfactory paying basis. Though the has uphill work he has not received a cent from London, where the property is owned, and has succeeded in paying some \$2590 worth of liabilities of the former management. He personally lead the company about \$8900 until the new capital could be raised. During the time 500 tons of custom ore has been milled, and \$81,000 in bullion produced, or which a cash profit of about \$7000 was made, and \$9000 in tailings. Mr. Sewell is now expecting about \$90,000 as fresh working capital, and will then be able to extend milling operations. The assays are guaranteed to correspond with those of the United States Mint, and ores can be sampled by battery or crusher at the optic of the shipper. Mr. Sewell publishes in the Sait Lake Tribane a communication in which he speaks of the success of the company, and says:—"For valuable see vices during the trying past I have to thank the First National Bank for the kind ness and confidence it has reposed in me in coming forward on several cosagions as Mr. Hussey has done, during the worst part of the financial crisis, with sun varying from \$6000 to \$6000 for the purchase of ore; in consequence all the bullie from this mill has been consigned to the First National Bank, and forwarded by Mr. Hussey to New York. I have also to thank that gentleman for supplying the mill, up to date, with about 400 tons of ore from the Sumyside Mine, and for the lind mill, up to date, with about 400 tons of ore from the Sumyside Mine, and for the lind mill, up to date, with about 400 tons of ore from the Sumyside Mine, and for the sum of the form the Sumyside Mine, and for the sum of the form the Sumyside Mine, and for the sum of the form the Sumyside Mine, and from this mill has been consigned to the First National Bank, and forwarded by Mr. Hussey to New York. I have also to thank that gentleman for supplying the mill, up to date, with about 400 tons of ore from the Sunnyside Mine, and for he continued patronage in that respect, as ores from that mine continue to be shippedaily. Before Christmas some \$25,000 more of bullion will be consigned to the bank. When the new capital of the Camp Floyd Mining Company arrives, we shall be in a position to return past favours, and I am glad to mention in this connection that two of principal properties which the new Camp Floyd Company with the tone of the company will be consigned to the satisfactor of the company of the company will be considered to the company of the company will be considered to the company of the company will be considered to the company of the company are in a more satisfactory condition, and that a profit will be realised to their investment. Utah mines are in the shade just now on account of the man swindling transactions carried on by unscrupulous tricksters, who had their or welfare and not those of the mining interests at heart. People here and in Enland had almost begun to think that honesty and Utah mining could not go hand in-hand, and the Territory has suffered accordingly. The success of only a few of the properties held in the English market will do much to dissipate these idea and inspire confidence in mining property. With competent and honest manage and a due regard for the interest of the company, not individuals, many of the mines now behind a cloud will, no doubt, come into the sunshine again. We notice in the Tribune of the 21st that the mill at Camp Floyd is working satisfactorily, and that a complimentary testimonial to Mr. Sewell has been gotten at thanking him for his energy, skill, and perseverance in bringing out the mining interests of that distirct, and has been universally signed by the residence of the ton and the surrounding country. Three bars of high grade-silver-bullion for

* "The Naturalist in Nicaragua: a Narrative of a Residence at the Gold Mines of Chontales; Journeys in the Savannahe and Forests, with Observations on Anials and Plants in reference to the Theory of Evolution of Living Forms." By HOMAS BELT, F.G.S. Landon: John Murray, Albemarle-street.